



National Small Business Week 2016 Awards Nominations Guidelines

U.S. Small Business Administration

Deadline for submission: 3:00pm ET, January 11, 2016

Nomination Website: <http://awards.sba.gov>

*National award winners will be announced during National Small Business Week
in May 2016.*



Are You Our Next Winner?

**By Maria Contreras-Sweet,
SBA Administrator**

It is no secret that small businesses are the engine of America's economy. Whether it is a family restaurant or a high-tech startup, small businesses create most new American jobs, as well as opportunities for social mobility and community renewal.

That is why every American President since 1963 has dedicated one week, National Small Business Week, to celebrate the achievements and contributions of our nation's small businesses. During the first week of May, the U. S. Small Business Administration will shine the spotlight on entrepreneurs who realized their dreams and transformed lives and communities by growing a successful small business.

We are currently seeking nominations of entrepreneurs and businesses representing a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences to reflect the dynamic face of American small businesses. By nominating yourself or a business in your community, you could give hard-working small business owners the opportunity to receive the national recognition they've earned.

When I accepted the call to serve my country as the SBA Administrator, President Obama asked me to be a voice for SBA and ensure our programs give entrepreneurs the greatest chance to succeed. To that end, I have rebranded SBA as "Smart, Bold, and Accessible." Smart is for integrating technology in how we serve America's small businesses; Bold represents the new foreign markets that we're helping small businesses reach; and Accessible means adopting inclusive strategies so Americans from all walks of life can get the capital, contracts and counseling needed to succeed.

National Small Business Week is an opportunity for the SBA to profile the rich diversity of our country's entrepreneurial heritage and the highlight the breadth of services the federal government offers to be a value-added partner in our small business economy.

Having started three small businesses before joining the President's cabinet – including a community bank that specialized in small business lending – I know firsthand that launching a new venture is a risk-filled journey. It's important that every American with aspirations to start or grow a business knows the SBA is here to help develop and execute a viable business plan. Succeeding as a small business owner takes dedication, strength, and courage. These are the qualities we seek in our National Small Business Week award winners. I look forward to receiving your nominations and hosting our most successful National Small Business Week yet in 2016.

Small Business Exporter of the Year

SBA will make Small Business Exporter of the Year awards to eligible small businesses at the State level (from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam) and the National level to small business owners who represent the nation's strong entrepreneurial spirit and rich diversity. In those states served by more than one SBA district office, each district office will select a district level winner and the State winner will be selected at the regional level. The National Small Business Exporter of the Year will be selected from the regional level winners.

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

Any individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business that is engaged in exporting may be nominated. Partners who jointly own and operate a small business may be nominated as a "team," so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four. A nominee for Small Business Exporter of the Year must own or operate a business defined as "small" for its primary industry under the applicable SBA size standards. Individuals who have received the Small Business Person Award or Exporter Award at the State level within the past five years are not eligible. Elected officials are not eligible. Nominees must also be residents of the United States or its territories. Nominees will be subject to background checks. Small businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws. While receipt of SBA assistance is not required, it is preferred. Consult your nearest SBA district office if you have questions.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for the Small Business Exporter of the Year award. Individuals may also self-nominate. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one National Small Business Week 2016 award category. SBA employees may help to solicit nominations, but they cannot submit nominations on behalf of the nominee.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1) Nominations may be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located; or
- 2) Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on <http://awards.sba.gov>.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for Small Business Exporter of the Year submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be postmarked or hand delivered to the appropriate SBA District Office **no later than 3:00pm ET**,

January 11, 2016. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 3:00pm ET, January 11, 2016.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations must contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

1. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nominee Background Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal. For “team” nominations, a background form is required for each team member;
2. A completed nomination form (SBA Form 3302, Small Business Exporter of the Year) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal;
3. An original 8” x 10” or 5” x 7” photo of the nominee or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi is required; photocopies are not acceptable. For “team” nominations, a photo of each nominee or group photo is acceptable;
4. Additional supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation, nomination letter (if not self-nominated) and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination (supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages). Videos will not be considered.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the Exporter of the Year award?

In evaluating the nomination packages for the Exporter of the Year award, the judges will use the following criteria:

- 1) Increased sales, profits and/or growth of employment because of exporting.
- 2) Creative overseas marketing strategies.
- 3) Effective solutions to export-related problems, including trade financing, payment, and currency issues; market-entry and logistical challenges; cultural differences, etc.
- 4) Demonstrated encouragement of other small businesses to export.
- 5) Volunteer assistance to other small businesses entering the export market.
- 6) Cooperation with other businesses in the creation of export trading companies and/or introduction of unique trading relationships, products or services.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

SBA will make Small Business Exporter of the Year awards to eligible small businesses at the District, Regional, and National levels.

Winners at each level will be selected by a panel of judges that may be comprised of both SBA employees and non-Federal employees. The National Exporter of the Year will be selected by the SBA Administrator based on, but not restricted to, the recommendations of the panel of judges of federal employees. Non-federal employees serving as judges must sign a conflict of interest/non-disclosure certification.